

—Slug:..... COMM-0855.wc.town_mtg_rdp
—Contributor.....
—Contributor email.....
—For section..... News
—Format..... News - no byline
—Dateline.....
—Article Number:..... 43244



Notes from editor (not for publication):



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

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1 Town Meeting Roundup

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3 TEXT BODY:

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4 ***Newfane to explore Town Meeting changes;***
5 ***condemns ICE, Iran conflict***

6 NEWFANE — Voters gathered at Union Hall on March 3
7 to approve spending about \$1.9 million for general and highway
8 operations, put \$497,000 in the Capital Reserve Fund, and
9 provide \$42,435 for 30 nonprofit and community organizations.

10 Other spending approved included \$25,467 for annual
11 payments on the town's excavator and \$6,750 for the Reappraisal
12 Reserve Fund.

13 Voters approved a pair of non-binding resolutions.

14 The first, proposed by Dan DeWalt, was a condemnation
15 of "the terror and killing being perpetuated by ICE operatives"
16 and called on the U.S. Congress "to defund and dismantle the
17 agency as it now exists."

18 The other resolution condemned "the unprovoked attack
19 and start of an illegal and immoral war against Iran," and urged
20 Congress to invoke the War Powers Act and call on the president
21 to immediately bring home the troops.

22 Voters also approved an article to direct the Selectboard
23 to create an ad hoc committee to get public input on the
24 location, time, and day of the week when Town Meeting will be
25 held.

26 ***Marlboro votes to close its elementary school***

27 MARLBORO — By a 311-65 vote, the Marlboro
28 Elementary School will close its doors at the end of the current
29 school year, and tuition out its students to one or more
30 elementary schools in accordance with Vermont law.

31 Also during March 3 balloting, voters approved a \$3.37
32 million school budget for fiscal year 2027, resulting in per-pupil
33 education spending of \$15,224, which is 7.06% lower than the
34 current year's per-pupil spending.

35 Voters also approved a \$838,275 General Fund budget
36 and a \$1.11 million Highway Fund budget. They also OK'd
37 \$42,000 for the Marlboro Volunteer Fire Company Inc. to help
38 defray operating expenses and \$48,000 for protective wear,
39 breathing apparatus (SCBA), equipment, and firehouse upgrades,
40 as well as \$21,525 to Rescue Inc. and \$7,000 to Deerfield Valley
41 Rescue.

Putney ups its funding for Putney Food Shelf

PUTNEY — Citing increased need for its services, Town Meeting voters on March 3 approved increasing the town's appropriation for the Putney Food Shelf from about \$7,500 to \$20,219 — or 1% of the town budget — for the coming fiscal year.

According to Food Shelf Executive Director Hannah Pick, last year the organization served 7,282 people from 185 families in Putney, Dummerston, Westminster, and Brattleboro, with 3,250 visits to the shelf from Putney.

Changes to eligibility for federal food assistance programs have increased demand in recent months.

Westminster voters also increased funding for the food shelf, from \$5,000 to \$7,000, at its Feb. 28 Town Meeting.

Putney voters approved a \$2 million general fund (an increase of 6.6%), and \$1.2 million for the highway fund (a decrease of 10.3%).

Town Moderator Meg Mott was honored at the meeting. She is retiring after eight years of service.

Stratton discusses impact of school consolidation

STRATTON — What usually is Windham County's fastest Town Meeting took a little longer this year, as voters spent about 80 minutes on school matters and about 50 minutes on town business.

While voters quickly approved a tuition budget of about \$1 million, there was more concern about how the town will be affected by Act 73, the state plan to consolidate school district and alter school-choice options.

The town currently tuitions its students to neighboring schools, including independent schools such as Burr & Burton, Long Trail, and Stratton Mountain School. There is concern Stratton is vulnerable to being merged into a district that would

75 require students to attend Leland & Gray in Townshend,
76 eliminating school choice.

77 Voters then approved \$1.28 million for the General Fund
78 budget, \$1.62 million for the Highway Fund, and \$51,885 for 25
79 nonprofit, emergency service, and community organizations.

80 Just 25 of the town's 247 registered voters were in
81 attendance.

82 ***Athens changes town clerk, treasurer posts to***
83 ***appointed positions***

84 ATHENS — Town Meeting voters on March 2 approved
85 changing the town clerk and treasurer positions to being
86 appointed, rather than elected.

87 The Selectboard requested the change after experiencing
88 trouble filling the positions via the ballot. Amber Stevens of
89 Athens is serving in both roles for the rest of this year.

90 However, voters rejected by voice vote two petitioned
91 articles that would have reduced the size of the Selectboard from
92 five to three, and to switch the town to a fiscal year from than a
93 calendar year.

94 Voters approved the town budget of \$734,355, with
95 \$633,380 to be raised by taxes.

96 The budget is lower than last year's, but the town did not
97 have a surplus available to offset a small tax increase.

98 ***Westminster approves non-binding article to***
99 ***remove Trump, Vance from office***

100 WESTMINSTER — While residents on Feb. 28 approved
101 town and school budgets during the annual Town Meeting at the
102 Bellows Falls Union High School auditorium, it was a non-
103 binding article on the warning that generated the most attention.

104 An article calling for the removal of President Donald
105 Trump and Vice President J.D. Vance for crimes against the U.S.
106 Constitution, passed overwhelmingly, but it took some
107 maneuvering to so.

108 Organizer Bari Shamas said 144 citizens signed a
109 petition asking for the issue to be put on the warning.

110 "We believe in democracy," she said. "A small group of
111 people can make a difference."

112 Westminster West resident John Todd headed off a
113 potentially lengthy discussion when he asked to call the question
114 and end debate right after the article was introduced.

115 The article was overwhelmingly approved on a voice
116 vote, but Shamas then requested a paper ballot. After some
117 debate, ballots were cast and it passed a second time on a 121-6
118 vote.

119 Voters rejected another article to abandon the town
120 manager form of government. While the town has used that
121 system for years, the article was seen as a referendum on the one-
122 year tenure of Town Manager Louis Bordeaux, whose contract
123 won't be renewed at the end of June, according to Selectboard
124 Chair Craig Allen.

125 The town's \$5.1 million school budget passed on a voice
126 vote. That budget is down 3%, but per-pupil costs are up 2%, and
127 the tax rate is expected to increase by 4 cents.

128 The town's general fund budget of \$1.4 million and the
129 highway budget of \$1.7 million were also approved.

130 ***Guilford approves budgets, honors Porche***

131 GUILFORD — Town Meeting voters on Feb. 28 approved
132 a General Fund budget of \$1.41 million, a highway budget of
133 \$1.41 million, and \$339,550 for the Guilford Volunteer Fire
134 Department.

135 The General Fund vote took place after a separate vote
136 was needed to amend the article. According to Town
137 Administrator Erika Elder, town officials discovered that the
138 budget as printed in the meeting warning mistakenly included
139 two appropriations that were already warned as separate special
140 articles: \$339,550 for the Fire Department and \$17,731 for
141 Human Services organizations.

142 After voters approved the amendment removing those
143 two items, resident Tammy Sargent offered another amendment to
144 reduce the General Fund by \$248,914. It was rejected by
145 Australian ballot. Voters then approved the amended budget.

146 Residents also honored Veranda Porche for her nine years
147 of service on the Selectboard. She did not run for re-election this
148 year.

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LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

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LINKS:

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VIDEO:

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LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

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